

**Request for Reconsideration:**

Applicants are amending claims 13, 14, and 16, to include the limitations of claims 50, 52, and 54, respectively. Further, Applicants are rewriting claims 51, 53, and 55 in independent form to include the limitations of their base claims. Applicants also are cancelling claims 50, 52, and 54, without prejudice. In addition, Applicants are adding new claims 56-59, which depend from amended claim 55 and correspond to claims 17-20. No new matter is added by these amendments, and the amendments are fully supported by the specification. As a result of these amendments claims 13, 14, 16-20, 51, 53, and 55-59 are pending in this application. Applicants are including a check in the amount of \$400 for fee (Fee Code 1201) for filing two, additional independent claims. Nevertheless, in the event of any variance between the fees determined by Applicants and those determined by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO), please charge any such variance to the undersigned's Deposit Account No. 02-0375. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter these amendments and reconsider the above-captioned patent application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

**Remarks:**

1. Rejections.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation that the Examiner indicates that claims 50-55 contain allowable subject matter and that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of their base claims. Further, claims 13, 14, and 16-20 now stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly rendered obvious by U.S. Patent No. 6,156,064 to Chouinard in view of Thoratec Products Information. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

2. Chouinard in view of Thoratec Products Information.

As noted above, claims 13, 14, and 16-20 stand rejected as allegedly rendered obvious by Chouinard in view of Thoratec Products Information. Applicants are amending claims 13, 14, and 16 to include the limitations of allowable claims 50, 52, and 54, respectively. Therefore, claims 13, 14, and 16, and the claims dependent therefrom, are allowable. Further, in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion, Applicants are rewriting claims 51, 53, and 55, in independent form to include the limitations of their base claims. In view of these amendments, Applicants maintain that the obviousness rejections of claims 13, 14, and 16-20 now are moot, and Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the obviousness rejections.

**Conclusion:**

Applicants respectfully submit that this application, as amended, is in condition for allowance, and such disposition is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that an interview with Applicants' representatives, either in person or by telephone, would expedite

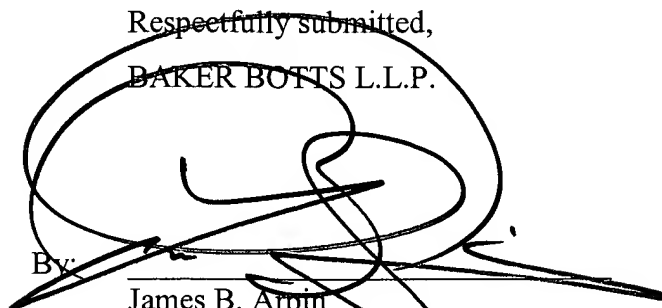
prosecution of this application, we would welcome such an opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure